

**REMARKS**

In the Office Action mailed December 29, 2003, the Examiner noted that claims 15, 28 and 39 were pending, and rejected all claims. Claims 15, 28 and 39 have been amended, new claims 45-50 have been added and, thus, in view of the forgoing claims 15, 28, 39 and 45-50 remain pending for reconsideration which is requested. No new matter has been added. The Examiner's rejections are traversed below.

On pages 2 and 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected all claims under 35 U.S.C. section 102 as anticipated by Bessho or Wang.

Bessho is directed to a character recognition method using a ruled line deleting method. Bessho, as indicated in S118 of figure 10 and col. 11, lines 32-35, deletes a ruled line based on black run length and the coordinates of line segments having a predetermined black run length.

Wang (see col. 5, line 65 – col. 6, line 10) is directed to a system that discriminates text lines in a document. The document image is divided into columns rectangular areas in the columns. The areas whose heights are shorter than 3 pixels or taller than the average height times a tolerance factor are deleted.

Neither of these references addresses deleting a ruled line responsive to a height-to-width ratio as emphasized in claims 15, 28 and 39. It is submitted that the present claimed invention patentably distinguishes over Bessho and/or Wang and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

New claims 45-47 emphasize deleting a first straight line when a pair of lines are adjacent and the first straight line of the pair is shorter than a threshold. Nothing in the prior art teaches or suggests such. Claims 48-50 emphasize deleting a first straight line when a pair of lines are adjacent and the pair are separated by less than a threshold. Nothing in the prior art teaches or suggests such. It is submitted that these new claims distinguish over the prior art.

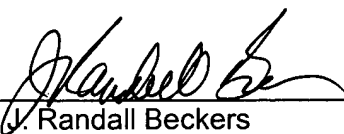
It is submitted that the claims are not taught, disclosed or suggested by the prior art. The claims are therefore in a condition suitable for allowance. An early Notice of Allowance is requested.

If any further fees, other than and except for the issue fee, are necessary with respect to this paper, the U.S.P.T.O. is requested to obtain the same from deposit account number 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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